

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Lebanon

SUBJECT Split in the High Command of the
Lebanese Communist Party

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A. Criticism Directed toward Baghdash

1. Source reports that the dictatorial policy which Khalid Baghdash continually has followed and his immoral conduct have at last resulted in a series of internal clashes which have led to a split in the Communist Party's high command.
2. Although Baghdash's actions have long been the subject of innumerable unfavorable private discussions among Party leaders (particularly Artin Madoyan, Farajallah Milu, and Ra'if Khuri), they were prevented from openly opposing him because of the Party's severe discipline, the obedience of its members to Central Committee decisions, and, most important of all, because these leaders feared either being separated or dismissed from the Party, since Baghdash is very popular with the overwhelming majority of Party members.
3. Despite the fact that Baghdash knew that his behavior was repugnant to Communist Party leaders, he overlooked their displeasure, fearing that any action taken by him against them might cause disunity among the ranks, for which, inevitably, he would be held responsible.

B. Differences between Khalid Baghdash and Artin Madoyan

4. For three years Madoyan and Baghdash have carried on a silent war during which Baghdash tried to replace Madoyan. However, circumstances were not propitious because Madoyan is highly experienced in Party affairs and is one of its original founders. Furthermore, Madoyan enjoys the sympathy of the Soviet Communist Party Command and is one of the favored leaders in Communist and workers' circles; his many persecutions, severe tests, and imprisonments have never weakened or affected his fanatical attachment to Party ideologies and principles.

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5. The whole affair reached a climax when Baghdash went to Beirut in October 1948 and developed such a close friendship with Garabed Pashabedian that he spent most of his time in the Pashabedian home.
6. Suspicious of this friendship, Madoyan assigned his agents to conduct surveillance on Baghdash, which disclosed that the latter was in love with Pashabedian's wife, Marie Pashabedian, with whom he was caught in "flagrante delicto." This increased Madoyan's hatred of the Party's Secretary General and convinced him that such action on Baghdash's part necessitated his trial.
7. Madoyan's activity intensified Baghdash's anger and resentment toward him and provided Baghdash with an opportunity to carry out his three-year old plan of replacing Madoyan. Madoyan, consequently, was ordered transferred to Damascus, ostensibly in the Party's higher interests, but actually to enable Baghdash to carry on unobserved his love affair with Marie Pashabedian, source states. Pashabedian was appointed by Baghdash to replace Madoyan.
8. Madoyan complied with Command orders and went to Damascus. However, he protested to the Central Committee that he was unable to live away from his family in Beirut and that he regarded the Party's order as despotic and shorn of all Party interest, and asked that his case be reconsidered. Farajallah Hilu also tried to have Madoyan's case discussed at Central Committee meetings, but Baghdash and the majority of the members refused to discuss it.
9. After waiting two months and a half without receiving favorable action on his complaint, Madoyan ceased his Party activities. Baghdash, who regarded this action as rebellion against Command orders and a violation of Party laws, called the Central Committee to a meeting on 4 February 1949 and adopted a decision to separate Madoyan from the Party and to place him under surveillance.
10. At a meeting held in Antelias on 12 February, instructions were issued to the Communist sections, justifying the Command's action against Madoyan and stating that, if Madoyan interfered with the Party decision, he must be accused of violating Party principles and doctrines.

C. Differences between Khalid Baghdash and Ra'if Khuri

11. The internal troubles of the Party did not end with the separation from it of Artin Madoyan, and a new incident arose between Khalid Baghdash and Ra'if Khuri. The Cominform was greatly pained at the failure of the demonstration in front of the UNESCO building, and of the demonstration for the release of Mustafa 'Aris and his comrades, and sent a letter to the Lebanese Party, reproaching it for failing to carry out the demonstrations successfully. The Cominform demanded that investigations be initiated and punishment meted out to those responsible for these failures. Baghdash regarded the Party's Beirut local committee as responsible and, without the knowledge of those outside the Command, ordered the dissolution of the local committee and referred some of its members to the Party's punitive councils.

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12. Source states that Party members wonder why Baghdash and his close associates carried out this action, and this measure has split the Command into two camps: one side, headed by Baghdash, Niqola Shawi, Mustafa 'Aris and Hasan Quraytin, sanctions severe disciplinary measures, while the other side, headed by Ra'if Khuri and supported by such intellectuals as Michel Baddurah, Qadri Qal'aji, Wasfi Banna, Farajallah Hilu, Yusuf Khattar Hilu, Murshid Saliba, and others, opposes such disciplinary action.
13. Although the conflict between Baghdash and Madoyan has remained within the Command, it is feared that the differences between Baghdash and Ra'if Khuri may become known outside the Communist Party, in view of Khuri's closeness to the Soviet Legation and the fact that he is a Lebanese—while Baghdash is a Syrian.
14. Despite Mustafa 'Aris's stand alongside Baghdash in such matters, the Party Command, at a recent meeting, discussed the question of 'Aris's denial, during his trial before the Court of Justice, that he had knowledge of the demonstration, and his claim that, therefore, he was not guilty. The Command regarded 'Aris's evasion of Party responsibilities as a retreat, and also as a weakness of principle, and issued him a reprimand.
15. This source states that the Soviet Legation has intervened directly to heal the breach in the Communist Party, and has confirmed the general facts reported in the preceding paragraphs, including the line-up against Baghdash and the affair of Marie Pashabezian.
16. Source states that Qadri Qal'aji had already written fifty pages of violent attack on Baghdash and his faction, which he intended to publish, but source believed it possible that the Soviets could now prevent it.
17. Source's opinion is that Ra'if Khuri will prove too tough an adversary for Baghdash, who, he feels, is showing signs of slipping and will gradually lose his control over the Party.

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- * ~~SECRET/CONFIDENTIAL~~ Comment. Qala'ji's feud with Baghdash has been reported to be the result of an attempt by Baghdash to seduce Qala'ji's wife or sister. ~~SECRET/CONFIDENTIAL~~

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